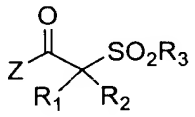
Please amend claims 1 and 15 to read as follows:

1. A method of preparing alpha-sulfonyl derivatives of the formula V:



V

wherein Z is H, OH, -NYOX, $-OR_5$ or $-NR_5R_6$;

X is hydrogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms, benzyl, hydroxyethyl, t-butyldimethylsilyl, trimethylsilyl or tetrahydropyranyl;

Y is hydrogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms, aryl of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, 5-10 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O and S, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl; wherein said alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, cycloalkyl and cycloheteroalkyl group of Y is optionally substituted on any atom capable of substitution, with 1 to 3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 double bonds; alkynyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, $-OR_5$, =O, -CN, $-COR_5$, perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, -O-perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, $-CONR_5R_6$,$-S(O)_nR_5$, $-OPO(OR_5)OR_6$, $-PO(OR_5)R_6$, $-OC(O)OR_5$, $-OR_5NR_5R_6$, $-OC(O)NR_5R_6$, $-C(O)NR_5OR_6$, $-COOR_5$, $-SO_3H$, $-NR_5R_6$, $-N[(CH_2)_2]_2NR_5$, $-NR_5COR_6$, $-NR_5COOR_6$, $SO_2NR_5R_6$, $-NO_2$, $-N(R_5)SO_2R_6$, $-NR_5CONR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)NR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(SO_2R_5)R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(C=OR_5)R_6$, -tetrazol-5-yl, $-SO_2NHCN$, $-SO_2NHCONR_5R_6$, phenyl, heteroaryl and 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl;

R_1 and R_2 are each, independently, aryl of 6 to 10 carbon atoms; 5-10 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O and S; 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl; or R_1 and R_2 taken together with the carbon atom to which they are attached form a 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl ring; and wherein the aryl, heteroaryl, or cycloheteroalkyl, may be optionally substituted on any atom capable of substitution with from 1 to 3 substituents selected from halogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1

to 3 double bonds; alkynyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, $-OR_5$, =O, -CN, $-COR_5$, perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, -O-perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, $-CONR_5R_6$, $-S(O)_nR_5$, $-OPO(OR_5)OR_6$, $-PO(OR_5)R_6$, $-OC(O)OR_5$, $-OR_5NR_5R_6$, $-OC(O)NR_5R_6$, $-C(O)NR_5OR_6$, $-COOR_5$, $-SO_3H$, $-NR_5R_6$, $-N[(CH_2)_2]_2NR_5$, $-NR_5COR_6$, $-NR_5COOR_6$, $SO_2NR_5R_6$, $-NO_2$, $-N(R_5)SO_2R_6$, $-NR_5CONR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)NR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(SO_2R_5)R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(C=OR_5)R_6$, -tetrazol-5-yl, $-SO_2NHCN$, $-SO_2NHCONR_5R_6$, phenyl, heteroaryl and 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl;

R_3 is alkyl of 1-18 carbon atoms, alkenyl of 2-18 carbon atoms having 1 to 3 double bonds, alkynyl of 2-18 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl, aryl of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, 5-6 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O, and S; wherein said alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloheteroalkyl, aryl and heteroaryl of R_3 may optionally be substituted on any atom capable of substitution with from 1 to 3 substituents selected from halogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 double bonds; alkynyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, $-OR_5$, =O, -CN, $-COR_5$, perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, -O-perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, $-CONR_5R_6$,$-S(O)_nR_5$, $-OPO(OR_5)OR_6$, $-PO(OR_5)R_6$, $-OC(O)OR_5$, $-OR_5NR_5R_6$, $-OC(O)NR_5R_6$, $-C(O)NR_5OR_6$, $-COOR_5$, $-SO_3H$, $-NR_5R_6$, $-N[(CH_2)_2]_2NR_5$, $-NR_5COR_6$, $-NR_5COOR_6$, $SO_2NR_5R_6$, $-NO_2$, $-N(R_5)SO_2R_6$, $-NR_5CONR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)NR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(SO_2R_5)R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(C=OR_5)R_6$, -tetrazol-5-yl, $-SO_2NHCN$, $-SO_2NHCONR_5R_6$, phenyl, heteroaryl and 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl;

R_4 is hydrogen; aryl; aralkyl, heteroaryl; heteroaralkyl, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms; $-C(O)_nR_5$, $-CONR_5R_6$ or SO_2R_5;

R_5 and R_6 are each independently hydrogen, optionally substituted aryl; 4-8 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O and S; cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms; 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl; alkyl of 1-18 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-18 carbon atoms or alkynyl of 2-18 carbon atoms; or R_5 and R_6 taken together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached may form a 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl ring; and

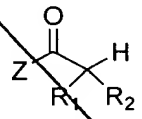
n is 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutical salt thereof,

which comprises reacting a sulfonyl fluoride of the formula III

$R_3'SO_2F$

III

wherein R_3' is as hereinabove defined for R_3 with the proviso that R_3' does not contain a group that can form an anion under basic conditions; with a carbonyl compound of the formula IV:

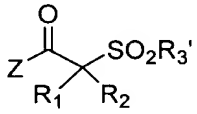


IV

wherein Z is H, OH, YNOX, $-NR_5R_6$ or OR_5, and X, Y, R_1, R_2, R_5, and R_6 are as hereinabove defined; in the presence of a metal hydride or amide base in an ether organic solvent at temperatures from about -78°C to about 30°C to produce an alpha-sulfonyl carbonyl compound of formula V;

any reactive substituent group(s) being protected during the reaction and removed thereafter ; and further if desired isolating any chiral or stereoisomeric product as an individual isomer.

15. A method of preparing alpha-sulfonyl derivatives of the formula V:



V

wherein wherein Z is H, OH, -NYOX, $-OR_5$ or $-NR_5R_6$;

R_1 and R_2 are each, independently, aryl of 6 to 10 carbon atoms; 5-10 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O and S; 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl; or R_1 and R_2 taken together with the carbon atom to which they are attached form a 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl ring; and wherein the aryl, heteroaryl, or cycloheteroalkyl, may be optionally substituted on any atom capable of substitution with from 1 to 3 substituents selected from halogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1

to 3 double bonds; alkynyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, $-OR_5$, =O, -CN, $-COR_5$, perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, -O-perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, $-CONR_5R_6$, $-S(O)_nR_5$, $-OPO(OR_5)OR_6$, $-PO(OR_5)R_6$, $-OC(O)OR_5$, $-OR_5NR_5R_6$, $-OC(O)NR_5R_6$, $-C(O)NR_5OR_6$, $-COOR_5$, $-SO_3H$, $-NR_5R_6$, $-N[(CH_2)_2]_2NR_5$, $-NR_5COR_6$, $-NR_5COOR_6$, $SO_2NR_5R_6$, $-NO_2$, $-N(R_5)SO_2R_6$, $-NR_5CONR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)NR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(SO_2R_5)R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(C=OR_5)R_6$, -tetrazol-5-yl, $-SO_2NHCN$, $-SO_2NHCONR_5R_6$, phenyl, heteroaryl and 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl;

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R_3' is alkyl of 1-18 carbon atoms, alkenyl of 2-18 carbon atoms having 1 to 3 double bonds, alkynyl of 2-18 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl, aryl of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, 5-6 membered heteroaryl having 1-3 heteroatoms selected from N, NR_4, O, and S; wherein said alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloheteroalkyl, aryl and heteroaryl of R_3 may optionally be substituted on any atom capable of substitution with from 1 to 3 substituents selected from halogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms; alkenyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 double bonds; alkynyl of 2-6 carbon atoms having from 1 to 3 triple bonds, cycloalkyl of 3-6 carbon atoms, $-OR_5$, =O, -CN, $-COR_5$, perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, -O-perfluoroalkyl of 1-4 carbon atoms, $-CONR_5R_6$,$-S(O)_nR_5$, $-OPO(OR_5)OR_6$, $-PO(OR_5)R_6$, $-OC(O)OR_5$, $-OR_5NR_5R_6$, $-OC(O)NR_5R_6$, $-C(O)NR_5OR_6$, $-COOR_5$, $-SO_3H$, $-NR_5R_6$, $-N[(CH_2)_2]_2NR_5$, $-NR_5COR_6$, $-NR_5COOR_6$, $SO_2NR_5R_6$, $-NO_2$, $-N(R_5)SO_2R_6$, $-NR_5CONR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)NR_5R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(SO_2R_5)R_6$, $-NR_5C(=NR_6)N(C=OR_5)R_6$, -tetrazol-5-yl, $-SO_2NHCN$, $-SO_2NHCONR_5R_6$, phenyl, heteroaryl and 5-10 membered cycloheteroalkyl; provided that R_3' does not contain a group that can form an anion under basic conditions;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises the steps of :

a) reacting a sulfonyl fluoride of formula III:

$R_3'SO_2F$

III

wherein R_3' is as defined in claim 1; with an enol ether of formula VIII: